

Chapter 5 – Distinction Designations

Distinction designations are awarded in recognition of outstanding achievement in specific areas. Campus distinctions are based on indicators of student performance in comparison to forty similar campuses.

For 2014, distinction designations are awarded in the following areas:

- Academic Achievement in Reading/English Language Arts (*campus only*)
- Academic Achievement in Mathematics (*campus only*)
- Academic Achievement in Science (*campus only*)
- Academic Achievement in Social Studies (*campus only*)
- Top 25 Percent: Student Progress (*campus only*)
- Top 25 Percent: Closing Performance Gaps (*campus only*)
- Postsecondary Readiness (*campus and district*)

Campuses and charter districts evaluated by alternative education accountability (AEA) provisions are not eligible to earn distinction designations.

Distinction Designation Labels

Reports for campuses and districts show one of the following labels for each distinction designation.

Distinction Earned. The campus or district is rated *Met Standard* and has met the criteria for the distinction designation.

No Distinction Earned. The campus or district did not meet the distinction designation criteria or was rated *Improvement Required*. (Those that are later granted a rating of *Met Standard* on appeal are eligible to be evaluated and may earn distinctions.)

Not Eligible. The campus or district does not have results to evaluate for the distinction designation, is evaluated by AEA provisions, is labeled *Not Rated* or *Not Rated: Data Integrity Issues*, or is paired.

Campus Comparison Groups

Each campus is assigned to a unique comparison group that consists of schools (from anywhere in the state), that closely match the “target” school. These are first identified by school type: Elementary, Middle School, High School, and Elementary/Secondary. Schools that do not match a typical grade span are in the group that most closely matches it. New for 2014—grade span is also used to identify similar campuses so that campuses with unique grade configurations are more closely matched (See the *School Types* chart in chapter 2 for more information.) Within those categories, schools are grouped with 40 other schools that are most similar on campus size, low grade/high grade, percent economically disadvantaged students, mobility rate, and percent of English language learners.

All distinction designations for a campus are based on performance that is in the top quartile (Q1) of its comparison group.

- For the Academic Achievement Distinction Designations (AADD), there must be at least 20 campuses in the campus comparison group for a particular indicator. That is, if fewer than 20 campuses in the comparison group have an indicator, that indicator cannot be

used to earn the distinction. This may affect schools with an uncommon range of grades

- Because schools do not have access to the performance of other schools until the accountability data tables are released on August 8, a school cannot see where it places within its comparison group and so cannot know whether it has earned a distinction until the ratings are released.

For details on how campus comparison groups are determined, see *Appendix H – Campus Comparison Groups*.

Distinction Designations

Academic Achievement in Reading/English Language Arts

An AADD is awarded to campuses for outstanding academic achievement in reading/English language arts (ELA) based on performance in the top 25 percent of its campus comparison group.

Who is eligible: Campuses that have a rating of *Met Standard*.

Student Groups: Performance is evaluated for *All Students* only for each indicator.

Minimum Size: Minimum size is determined separately for each indicator:

- **Attendance Rate.** Minimum size is based on total days in membership. If there are fewer than 1,800 total days in membership (e.g., 10 students x 180 school days) attendance cannot be used toward the distinction. Note that attendance rate cannot be the sole measure used by a campus to attain a distinction.
- **Assessments (STAAR, AP/IB, SAT, and/or ACT).** Minimum size is 10 students for each assessment. That is, if there are fewer than 10 test takers for an assessment, that indicator cannot be used toward the distinction.
- **Participation**
 - **AP/IB and Advanced/Dual Enrollment Course Completion.** Minimum size is 10 students completing a course.
 - **SAT/ACT Participation.** Minimum size is 10 graduates taking either the SAT or ACT.

Indicators:

AADD Reading/ELA Indicators	High School	Middle School / Junior High	Elementary	K-12
Attendance rate	√	√	√	√
Greater Than Expected Student Growth in Reading/ELA		√	√	
Grade 3 Reading Performance (Level III)			√	√
Grade 4 Writing Performance (Level III)			√	√
Grade 7 Writing Performance (Level III)		√		√
Grade 8 Reading Performance (Level III)		√		√
AP/IB Examination Participation: ELA	√			√
AP/IB Examination Performance: ELA	√			√
SAT/ACT Participation	√			√
SAT Performance: ELA	√			√
ACT Performance: ELA	√			√
Total Reading/ELA Indicators	6	4	4	10

Methodology: This distinction is determined as follows:

Step 1: Performance on each indicator that applies to the school is determined. A school must have at least 1 indicator besides attendance rate.

Step 2: Performance for each indicator within the school's campus comparison group is determined.

Step 3: To earn the distinction, the following must be met:

- High schools and combined elementary/secondary schools must be in the top quartile for 33 percent or more of their indicators.
- Middle schools, junior high schools, and elementary schools must be in the top quartile for 50 percent or more of their indicators.

The methodology, date, and source for each indicator are described in *Appendix K – Data Sources*.

Other Information:

- *Greater Than Expected Student Growth in Reading/ELA.* For 2014, this indicator does not apply to high schools/K-12 campuses because there are limited STAAR student growth measures (Index 2) for grades 9-12.
- *Assessments.* A complete list of AP and IB assessments used in determining this distinction is available in *Appendix K – Data Sources*.
- *Attendance Rate.* This is based on student attendance for the entire school year for students in grades 1-12. The Attendance Rate indicator applies to all four subject areas of the AADDs. Consequently, this indicator cannot be the sole measure used by a campus to attain an AADD.
- *Methodology:* The methodology and data sources used in determining each of the indicators in the table above are described in *Appendix K – Data Sources*.

<i>Example:</i> Colonial High School is fictional, but typical of Texas high schools with varied performance on the six indicators for this distinction. To determine whether it has earned the distinction, its performance is compared to its unique Campus Comparison Group—made up of itself and 40 other schools—for each of the six indicators. It must be in the top quartile (Q1) for at least 33% of the indicators for the AADD in Reading/ELA.							
Step 1	What is Colonial High School's performance on its six indicators?	Attendance rate 93.3%	AP/IB ELA Performance 72%	AP/IB ELA Participation 48.9%	SAT/ACT Participation 90%	Average SAT Performance in ELA 1079	Average ACT Performance in ELA 23.5
Step 2	Compare performance to campuses in Colonial HS Comparison Group.			Q1	Q1	Q1	
			Q2				Q2
		Q4					
Step 3	Is its performance in the top quartile?	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Result:		Performance on 3 of 6 indicators is in Q1, which is greater than 33% of indicators; therefore, the AADD in Reading/ELA is earned.					

Academic Achievement in Mathematics

An AADD is awarded to campuses for outstanding academic achievement in mathematics based on performance in the top 25 percent of its campus comparison group.

Who is eligible: Campuses that have a rating of *Met Standard*.

Student Groups: Performance is evaluated for *All Students* only for each indicator.

Minimum Size: Minimum size is determined separately for each indicator:

- **Attendance Rate.** Minimum size is based on total days in membership. If there are fewer than 1,800 total days in membership (e.g., 10 students x 180 school days) attendance cannot be used toward the distinction. Attendance rate cannot be the sole measure used by a campus to attain a distinction.
- **Assessments (STAAR, AP/IB, SAT, and/or ACT).** Minimum size is 10 students for each assessment. That is, if there are fewer than 10 test takers for an assessment, that indicator cannot be used toward the distinction.
- **Participation**
 - **AP/IB and Advanced/Dual Enrollment Course Completion.** Minimum size is 10 students completing a course.
 - **Algebra I by Grade 8-Participation.** Minimum size is 10 students taking the Algebra I EOC in grade 8 or earlier grades.
 - **SAT/ACT Participation.** Minimum size is 10 graduates taking either the SAT or ACT.

Indicators:

AADD Mathematics Indicators	High School	Middle School / Junior High	Elementary	K-12
Attendance rate	√	√	√	√
Greater Than Expected Student Growth in Mathematics		√	√	
Grade 5 Math Performance (Level III)			√	√
Algebra I by Grade 8-Participation		√		√
Algebra I by Grade 8-Performance (Level III)		√		√
AP/IB Examination Participation: Mathematics	√			√
AP/IB Examination Performance: Mathematics	√			√
SAT/ACT Participation	√			√
SAT Performance: Mathematics	√			√
ACT Performance: Mathematics	√			√
Total Mathematics Indicators	6	4	3	9

Methodology: This distinction is determined as follows:

Step 1: Performance on each indicator that applies to the school is determined. A school must have at least 1 indicator besides attendance rate.

Step 2: Performance for each indicator within the school's campus comparison group is determined.

Step 3: To earn the distinction, the following requirement must be met:

- High schools and combined elementary/secondary schools must be in the top quartile for 33 percent or more of their indicators.
- Middle schools, junior high schools, and elementary schools must be in the top quartile for 50 percent or more of their indicators.

The methodology, date, and source for each indicator are described in *Appendix K – Data Sources*.

Other Information:

- *Greater Than Expected Student Growth in Mathematics*. For 2014, this indicator does not apply to high schools/K-12 campuses because there are limited STAAR student growth measures (Index 2) for grades 9-12.
- *Assessments*. A complete list of AP and IB assessments used in determining this distinction is available in *Appendix K – Data Sources*.
- *Attendance Rate*. This is based on student attendance for the entire school year for students in grades 1-12. The Attendance Rate indicator applies to all four subject areas of the AADDs. Consequently, this indicator cannot be the sole measure used by a campus to attain an AADD.
- *Methodology*: The methodology and data sources used in determining each of the indicators in the table above are described in *Appendix K – Data Sources*.

Academic Achievement in Science

New for 2014, an AADD is awarded to campuses for outstanding academic achievement in science based on performance in the top 25 percent of its campus comparison group.

Who is eligible: Campuses that have a rating of *Met Standard*.

Student Groups: Performance is evaluated for *All Students* only for each indicator.

Minimum Size: Minimum size is determined separately for each indicator:

- *Attendance Rate*. Minimum size is based on total days in membership. If there are fewer than 1,800 total days in membership (e.g., 10 students x 180 school days) attendance cannot be used toward the distinction. Note that attendance rate cannot be the sole measure used by a campus to attain a distinction.
- *Assessments (STAAR, AP/IB, and/or ACT)*. Minimum size is 10 students for each assessment. That is, if there are fewer than 10 test takers for an assessment, that indicator cannot be used toward the distinction.
- *Participation (AP/IB)*. Minimum size is 10 students taking at least one AP or IB examination.

Indicators:

AADD Science Indicators	High School	Middle School / Junior High	Elementary	K-12
Attendance rate	√	√	√	√
Grade 5 Science Performance (Level III)			√	√
Grade 8 Science Performance (Level III)		√		√
EOC Biology Performance (Level III)	√			√
ACT Performance: Science	√			√
AP/IB Examination Participation: Science	√			√
AP/IB Examination Performance: Science	√			√
Total Science Indicators	5	2	2	7

Methodology: This distinction is determined as follows:

Step 1: Performance on each indicator that applies to the school is determined. A school must have at least 1 indicator besides attendance rate.

Step 2: Performance for each indicator within the school's campus comparison group is determined.

Step 3: To earn the distinction, the following requirement must be met:

- High schools and combined elementary/secondary schools must be in the top quartile for 33 percent or more of their indicators.
- Middle schools, junior high schools, and elementary schools must be in the top quartile for 50 percent or more of their indicators.

The methodology, date, and source for each indicator are described in *Appendix K – Data Sources*.

Other Information:

- *Assessments.* A complete list of AP and IB assessments used in determining this distinction is available in *Appendix K – Data Sources*.
- *Attendance Rate.* This is based on student attendance for the entire school year for students in grades 1-12. The Attendance Rate indicator applies to all four subject areas of the AADDs. Consequently, this indicator cannot be the sole measure used by a campus to attain an AADD.
- *Methodology:* The methodology and data sources used in determining each of the indicators in the table above are described in *Appendix K – Data Sources*.

Academic Achievement in Social Studies

New for 2014, an AADD is awarded to campuses for outstanding academic achievement in social studies based on performance in the top 25 percent of its campus comparison group.

Who is eligible: Campuses that have a rating of *Met Standard*.

Student Groups: Performance is evaluated for *All Students* only for each indicator.

Minimum Size: Minimum size is determined separately for each indicator:

- *Attendance Rate.* Minimum size is based on total days in membership. If there are fewer than 1,800 total days in membership (e.g., 10 students x 180 school days) attendance cannot be used toward the distinction. Note that attendance rate cannot be the sole measure used by a campus to attain a distinction.
- *Assessments (STAAR and/or AP/IB).* Minimum size is 10 students for each assessment. That is, if there are fewer than 10 test takers for an assessment, that indicator cannot be used toward the distinction.
- *Participation (AP/IB).* Minimum size is 10 students taking at least one AP or IB examination.

Indicators:

AADD Social Studies Indicators	High School	Middle School / Junior High	Elementary	K-12
Attendance rate	√	√	√	√
Grade 8 Social Studies Performance (Level III)		√		√
EOC U.S. History Performance (Level III)	√			√
AP/IB Examination Participation: Social Studies	√			√
AP/IB Examination Performance: Social Studies	√			√
Total Social Studies Indicators	4	2	N/A	5

Methodology: This distinction is determined as follows:

Step 1: Performance on each indicator that applies to the school is determined. A school must have at least 1 indicator besides attendance rate.

Step 2: Performance for each indicator within the school's campus comparison group is determined.

Step 3: To earn the distinction, the following requirement must be met:

- High schools and combined elementary/secondary schools must be in the top quartile for 33 percent or more of their indicators.
- Middle schools/junior high schools must be in the top quartile for 50 percent or more of their indicators.

The methodology, date, and source for each indicator are described in *Appendix K – Data Sources*.

Other Information:

- *Eligible Schools.* Because there are no social studies indicators available in grades 1-6, elementary schools are not eligible for this distinction.
- *Assessments.* A complete list of AP and IB assessments used in determining this distinction is available in *Appendix K – Data Sources*.
- *Attendance Rate.* This is based on student attendance for the entire school year for students in grades 1-12. The Attendance Rate indicator applies to all four subject areas of the AADDs. Consequently, this indicator cannot be the sole measure used by a campus to attain an AADD.
- *Methodology:* The methodology and data sources used in determining each of the indicators in the table above are described in *Appendix K – Data Sources*.

Top 25 Percent: Student Progress

A distinction designation is awarded for outstanding improvement in student progress to a campus if it is ranked in the top 25 percent (Q1) of campuses in its campus comparison group for Index 2.

Who is eligible: Campuses that are evaluated for Index 2 and have a rating of *Met Standard*. In 2014, high schools and K-12 campuses are not evaluated for Index 2 and, therefore, are ineligible to receive a distinction designation for Student Progress.

Methodology: Campuses are assigned a numeric value for Index 2. Those values are arranged in descending order for the campuses in the campus comparison group. If the Index 2 value for a campus is within the top quartile for its comparison group, it receives a distinction for Student Progress.

For more information on Index 2, see Chapters 3 and 4.

Top 25 Percent: Closing Performance Gaps

New for 2014, a distinction designation is awarded for outstanding performance in closing student achievement gaps to a campus if it is ranked in the top 25 percent (Q1) of campuses in its campus comparison group for Index 3.

Who is eligible: Campuses that are evaluated for Index 3 and have a rating of *Met Standard*.

Methodology: Campuses are assigned a numeric value for Index 3. Those values are arranged in descending order for the campuses in the campus comparison group. If the Index 3 value for a campus is within the top quartile for its comparison group, it receives a distinction for Closing Performance Gaps.

For more information on Index 3, see Chapters 3 and 4.

Postsecondary Readiness

New for 2014, a distinction designation is awarded to campuses and districts for outstanding academic performance in attainment of postsecondary readiness. Elementary and middle schools must show performance in the top 25 percent of similar schools in their campus comparison group. High schools and K-12 campuses must have at least 33 percent of the indicators in the top quartile. Districts must have at least 70 percent of its campus-level indicators in the top quartile.

Who is eligible: Districts and campuses that have a rating of *Met Standard*.

Student Groups: Indicators 5-8 use *All Students* performance only. Values used for indicators 1-4 are determined through the calculations for Index 4. See those descriptions for information on student groups.

Minimum Size: Indicators 5-8 must have a minimum size of 10 in the denominator. Values used for indicators 1-4 are determined through the calculations for Index 4. See those descriptions for information on minimum size.

Indicators for campuses:

Postsecondary-Readiness Indicators	High School	Middle School / Junior High	Elementary	K-12
1) Index 4 - Percent at STAAR Postsecondary Readiness Standard	√	√	√	√
2) Four-Year Longitudinal Graduation Rate	√			√
3) Four-Year Longitudinal RHSP/DAP Rate	√			√
4) College-Ready Graduates	√			√
5) Advanced/Dual Enrollment Course Completion Rate	√			√
6) SAT/ACT Participation	√			√
7) SAT/ACT Performance	√			√
8) AP/IB Examination Performance: Any Subject	√			√
Total	8	1	1	8

Methodology: This distinction is determined as follows:

Elementary and Middle Schools: Campuses are assigned a numeric value for the STAAR Postsecondary Readiness Standard component of Index 4. Those values are arranged in descending order for the campuses in the campus comparison group. If the STAAR performance for a campus is within the top quartile for its comparison group, it receives a distinction for Postsecondary Readiness.

High Schools: High schools in the top quartile on at least 33 percent of their eligible measures receive the postsecondary readiness distinction designation. See the following example.

Example: Beta High School is fictional, but typical of Texas high schools with varied performance on the eight indicators for this distinction. To determine whether it has earned the distinction, its performance is compared to its unique Campus Comparison Group—made up of itself and 40 other schools—for each of the eight indicators. It must be in the top quartile (Q1) for at least 33% of the indicators for the Postsecondary Readiness Distinction Designation.									
Step 1	What is Beta High School's performance on its eight indicators?	STAAR Post secondary Readiness Standard 47%*	Graduation Rate 87.7%*	RHSP/DAP Rate 85.9%*	College-Ready Graduates 85%*	Advanced/ Dual Enrollment Courses 60.9%	SAT/ACT Participation 94.4%	SAT/ACT Met Criterion 49.6%	AP/IB Met Criterion 61.3%
Step 2	Compare performance to campuses in Beta HS Comparison Group.			Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1		
		Q2	Q2						Q2
								Q3	
Step 3	Is its performance in the top quartile?	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Result		Performance on 4 of 8 indicators is in Q1, which is greater than 33% of indicators; therefore, the Postsecondary Readiness Distinction Designation is earned.							
* This is the same value as is used for determining Index 4.									

Districts: A district must have at least 70 percent of its campus-level postsecondary indicators in the top quartile (Q1). See the following example.

Districts with less than five campus-level postsecondary indicators are not eligible for the postsecondary readiness distinction.

<i>Example:</i> Alpha ISD has 12 campuses. Each campus has either 1 or 8 possible indicators for this distinction.			
School	Grade span	Postsecondary Indicators in top quartile for this school	Maximum Possible Postsecondary Indicators
High School A	9-12	6	8
High School B	9-12	6	8
Middle School C	6-8	0	1
Middle School D	6-8	0	1
Middle School E	6-8	1	1
Middle School F	6-8	1	1
Elementary G	PK-5	1	1
Elementary H	PK-5	1	1
Elementary I	PK-5	1	1
Elementary J	PK-5	1	1
Elementary K	PK-5	0	1
Elementary L	PK-5	1	1
Total		19	26
Result:	Performance on 19 of 26 indicators is in Q1, or 73%, which is greater than the 70% standard. The Postsecondary Readiness Distinction Designation is earned.		

Other Information:

- *Advanced Course Completion.* A list of advanced courses is available in *Appendix K – Data Sources*.
- *Standards.* For details on the standards for indicators that make up Index 4, see Chapters 3 and 4.
- *Methodology:* A complete description of the methodology and data sources used in determining each of the indicators in the table above is in *Appendix K – Data Sources*.